

Religious Exemption Process

**EXHIBIT
A**



Request Religious Exemption

- Parent/guardian access Religious Exemption Request Form
www.msdh.ms.gov
- Completes Form
- Schedules Appointment at Local Health Department



Health Department Appointment

- Brings or completes Religious Exemption Form at Health Department
- Parent views vaccine education video
- Nurse counsels parent/guardian on benefits and risk of immunizations
- Nurse signs Request and sends to Office of Immunizations



Office of Immunizations

- Reviews request for completeness
- Prepares Medical/Religious Exemption Certificate and packet.
- Presents religious exemption to State Epidemiologist for acceptance



State Epidemiologist

- Reviews and accepts completed religious exemption request with signature of Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption



Process Completion

- Exemption is recorded in MIIX
- Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption to school and parent/guardian

Mississippi State Department of Health IMMUNIZATION MANUAL M-201		TOPIC: Laws Regulations Requirements
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7.1 MS School Immunization Laws

MS School Entry Requirements

In order to enroll in any public or private kindergarten, elementary, or secondary school in Mississippi, a student must provide the school with a:

Certificate of Immunization Compliance (Form 121) – MUST be signed by the Regional Health Officer, a physician, nurse or MIIX validated.

or a

Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption (Form 122) - is not computer generated. This form **MUST** be signed by the State Epidemiologist or Deputy State Epidemiologist (refer to the Medical and/or Religious Exemption sections for specific information.)

The list of required immunizations is specified by the State Health Officer and is promulgated at least annually as directed by state statute. All vaccines are to be given at the appropriate age and intervals according to ACIP recommendations.

The MS Immunization Requirement and Schedules can be found on the MSDH website: at https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/resources/2029.pdf

7.2 Immunization Requirements for Out-of-State Students

All out-of-state students and foreign students attending childcare or K-12 school (public or private) in Mississippi must adhere to the following immunization requirements.

- Students are required to be age appropriately immunized with all required vaccines per Mississippi School Immunization Law and Child Care requirements. All appropriate immunizations must be documented on the Form 121 or Medical or Religious Exemptions as documented on Form 122 and be presented upon admission.

For example: a child entering the 8th grade will be required to meet all kindergarten and 7th grade entry requirements.

The standard immunization schedule is available at all health department clinics and the catch- up schedule for those children who are not current is available in the Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases - ("Pink Book").



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7.3 Medical Exemptions

General Instructions

To request a medical exemption from one or more required vaccinations, the MSDH [Medical Exemption Request](#) (Form 139-M) must be completed and signed by the child's physician (pediatrician, family practitioner, or internist) who is duly licensed in Mississippi. Children receiving specialized or tertiary care outside of the state may have medical exemption requests completed and signed by their out of state tertiary or specialty care physician, as indicated

All medical exemption requests submitted by a child's Mississippi licensed primary care physician (pediatrician, family practitioner, in state tertiary care specialist or internist) that are fully complete, including indication of the medical reason and designation of the exempted vaccines, and signed by the child's physician **will be accepted** by MSDH. Medical exemption requests completed and signed by an out of state tertiary care physician will be reviewed individually.

All medical exemption requests are submitted to the MSDH Office of Immunizations by the provider, reviewed for completeness, and signed by the State Epidemiologist or Deputy State Epidemiologist.

Once the medical exemption request is signed by the State Epidemiologist or Deputy State Epidemiologist, a Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption (Form 122) will be issued. Only the Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption (Form 122) signed and dated by the State Epidemiologist or Deputy State Epidemiologist provides official, documented proof that a child has been issued a medical exemption by MSDH. The original Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption (Form 122) will be housed at MSDH with a copy mailed to the parent and the requesting physician.

Follow up and requests for additional information will be conducted by the State Epidemiologist or Deputy State Epidemiologist for out-of-state medical exemption requests if needed. The parent and the requesting physician will be contacted in the event that the out-of-state medical exemption request is not accepted.



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Requesting a Medical Exemption

Any requested medical exemption will be accepted if it meets the following criteria.

- The MSDH [Medical Exemption Request](#) (Form 139-M) must be completed and signed by the child's physician (pediatrician, family practitioner, in state tertiary care specialist or internist) who is duly licensed in Mississippi.
Medical exemption requests completed and signed by an out of state tertiary care physician will be reviewed individually.
- The same requesting physician (pediatrician, family practitioner, internist, or tertiary care physician) must indicate on Form 139-M the medical condition of the child seeking exemption and indicate the exemption status for each of the listed vaccines.
- Form 139-M must be submitted to the Mississippi State Department of Health, Office of Immunizations.
- The State Epidemiologist or Deputy State Epidemiologist will review, accept, and sign the completed medical exemption request and MSDH mail a copy of the Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption (Form 122) to the parent and the pediatrician, family practitioner, internist, or tertiary care physician who submitted the Medical Exemption Request. The original Certificate of Medical/ Religious Exemption (Form 122) will be housed at MSDH.
- Data regarding medical exemptions will be maintained on the MSDH website at [Vaccine Exemptions - Mississippi State Department of Health \(ms.gov\)](#)
The exemption expiration date will be based on the circumstances for the exemption and will be no less than one school year unless otherwise indicated on the request.

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This policy will not amend the school law Section 41-23-37, Mississippi Code of 1972. Children with a Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption who are not adequately immunized will be excluded from school if there is a threat of vaccine preventable diseases occurring in the community. The child will be excluded until the infectious disease is no longer present or is no longer a threat to the safety and welfare of the child or other children in the school.

Questions regarding the medical exemption process or the medical exemption request form should be directed to the Office of Immunizations (601) 576-7751.

The medical exemption request form should be sent to the Mississippi State Department of Health to the attention of the Office of Immunizations.

Mississippi State Department of Health

Office of Immunizations

570 E. Woodrow Wilson, O-420

Post Office Box 1700

Jackson, MS 39215-1700

Telephone: (601) 576-7725

Fax: (601) 576-7497

The State Epidemiologist or Deputy State Epidemiologist can also be reached at (601) 576-7725.



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7.4 Religious Exemptions

General Instructions

To request a religious exemption from one or more required vaccinations for Mississippi school entry, the parent or guardian must complete the MSDH Religious Exemption Request (Form 139-R) and submit to the County Health Department (appointment is required).

A review of all religious exemption requests for completeness will be conducted at the Mississippi State Department of Health. Complete Religious exemption requests submitted per MSDH policy will be accepted and signed by the State Epidemiologist or Deputy State Epidemiologist. Once the request is reviewed and accepted, a Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption (Form 122) will be issued. Only the Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption (Form 122) **signed and dated by the State Epidemiologist or Deputy State Epidemiologist** provides official, documented proof that a child has been issued a medical/religious exemption by MSDH. The original Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption (Form 122) will be housed at MSDH with a copy mailed to the parent and the daycare or school indicated on the Religious Exemption Request Form.

Requesting a Religious Exemption

Any requested religious exemption will be accepted by MSDH, and a Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption issued if following guidelines are met.

- The MSDH Religious Exemption Request (Form 139-R) must be completed signed and submitted to the County Health Department (appointment is required) by the child's parent or guardian.
- The parent/guardian will review the Vaccine Education video and will be given the opportunity to ask questions.
- The Public Health Nurse will discuss the benefits and risks of immunizations with the parent/guardian.
- The Public Health Nurse will inform the parent/guardian that if any vaccine-preventable diseases for which the child has not been adequately immunized are occurring in or threatening to occur in the



community, the child will, for the safety and benefit of him/herself and other children, be excluded from day care/school until the infectious disease is no longer present or is no longer a threat to the safety and welfare of the child or other children in the day care/school.

- The form 139-R must be submitted by the County Health Department to the Mississippi State Department of Health, Office of Immunizations through intraoffice mail.
- The State Epidemiologist or Deputy State Epidemiologist will accept and sign any Religious Exemption request that includes all the required components. MSDH will mail a copy of the signed Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption (Form 122) to the parent and the daycare or school indicated on the Religious Exemption Request. The original Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption (Form 122) will be housed at MSDH.

Data regarding medical/religious exemptions will be posted annually and will be maintained on the MSDH website at [Vaccine Exemptions - Mississippi State Department of Health \(ms.gov\)](https://www.ms.gov/health/vaccine-exemptions) .

This policy will not amend the school law Section 41-23-37, Mississippi Code of 1972. Children with a Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption who are not adequately immunized will be excluded from school if there is a threat of vaccine preventable diseases occurring in the community. The child will be excluded until the infectious disease is no longer present or is no longer a threat to the safety and welfare of the child or other children in the school.

Questions regarding the religious exemption process or the religious exemption request form should be directed to the Office of Immunizations at (601) 576-7751.



Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption

Name of Student: _____ Birthdate: _____

Name of Parent: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

☐ Medical Exemption – A medical exemption from the required vaccinations for the above-named individual is hereby issued on the basis of a specific medical condition initiated by the child's pediatrician, family physician, or internist.

☐ Religious Exemption - A religious exemption from the required vaccinations for the above-named individual is hereby issued on the basis of religious reasons requested by the guardian/parent.

Vaccines Exempted

		DTaP	DT-Ped	Tdap	Td-Adult	IPV	Measles
Permanently							
Temporarily Until:	Date						

		Mumps	Rubella	Hep B	VAR	Hib	Pneumococcal
Permanently							
Temporarily Until:	Date						

Physician/Health Provider/HD: _____

Address:

Street City State Zip

Telephone Number: _____

Accepted by State Epidemiologist or Deputy State Epidemiologist:

Signature Date

School Officials: *Do Not* File this form in cumulative folder. The form *must* be maintained in a separate file and reviewed periodically to ensure validity

This form may be used for Day Care or K -12 Exemptions.